

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 669

By Dixon

A RESOLUTION to direct the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections to study the need to create geriatric prisons.

WHEREAS, the United States Census Bureau states that the elderly the fastest growing segment of the American population, a trend reflected among those persons incarcerated in American prisons; and

WHEREAS, the marked increase in the number of incarcerated elderly is due in large part to mandatory sentencing, longer sentences, and tighter parole policies; and

WHEREAS, with the rise in elderly prisoners, prisons' health care costs are escalating due to the higher demand for healthcare; and

WHEREAS, the National Center of Institutions and Alternatives estimates costs for an elderly inmate are \$69,900 a year, in contrast to the national average of \$22,000 for all inmates; and

WHEREAS, by design, few prisons are equipped to deal with the increased need for specialized medical care for aging prisoners; and

WHEREAS, sixteen states currently maintain separate facilities to house older inmates throughout the nation, while other states are struggling with the burgeoning questions and issues raised by the aging population of those imprisoned in correctional facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is a duty incumbent upon the members of this General Assembly and the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections to study the growing numbers of geriatric prisoners in Tennessee and the ability of the state's current correction system to superintend the medical needs of those prisoners; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections is hereby directed to study the need for and feasibility of establishing independent geriatric prisons within the state's correction system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections shall timely report its findings to the General Assembly by February 1, 2005.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be sent to the chair and executive director of the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections.